

MRS Eastern Meeting
Cumberland County DSS
January 25, 2006

Counties Present: Brunswick, Cumberland, Harnett, Lee, Lenoir, Nash, Onslow, Sampson, Wayne

Introductions

Updates from Raleigh

- A. Data Collection
- B. Training
 - Cornerstones
 - Opportunities from NCSU

Intake/Screening what cases are being sent to investigative track and why?

Your Questions

Training

Cornerstone A vs B

- If workers will be doing family assessments need to go to Cornerstone A. What about people do occasional on call? Holly says use your best judgment how occasional is occasional? The two trainings are the same for the first two days, but the scenarios that they train with are different for A and B.

NCSU Facilitator Opportunity

- Facilitation Support Program the same people that will help you with your facilitation (at no charge) have a Facilitation Support Program. It will need quarterly and talk about facilitation issues.

Policy Trainings

- Will have about 6 more policy trainings 3 in March, 3 in May (3/8 the only one set up as of yet) One in Burke, Cumberland. When she has finalized the dates, Holly will send them out on the email list.

Materials from Other Counties

- Tony has copies of materials that various counties have developed that other counties may find useful. He will be making CDs for people at this meeting, and anyone else can get one if they contact him. Be aware that the Division has not blessed any of these tools so use at your own risk!

Data

MRS2

- For the new counties, MRS2 will start on February 2. Did not make sense to roll out less than a month before the changes to the central registry.
- Please check the email for instructions as to how to use MRS2. Differences are significant for easing data entry (i.e. common edit where you can enter multiple children) so using it should be easy.

New counties

- New counties will not be responsible for entering until they have gone to the training and are doing family assessments.
- Asked all new counties to put someone on the email list and indicate if they felt they were ready for the training.

Harnett

- Eased into implementation.
- Originally did DV as forensic, but now unless there are weapons they do them as family assessment, otherwise go by policy. See the issue of marks on children requiring immediate attention as gray areas because sometimes it is hard to get in contract with the family first.
- They switched DV because program managers decided that they wanted to handle all possible cases as family assessment. They also do forensic assessments in a more family friendly way the whole agency approach is one of more respect.
- Hard to get school and medical personnel on board but they continue to meet with them. Very hard to get school participation in CFT.

Sampson

- A couple of workers doing family assessments.
- So far adhering to policy as to which cases go forensic and those only.

Lee

- The facilitator spoke for Lee. She has been there a year and they were already doing CFT meeting when she got there.
- Sometimes it is hard for workers to let go and let the facilitator run the meeting.
- She codes her work as 109, 210, or 215. She does the set up work before the meeting, and may do a couple of other things, even an assessment on occasion to keep busy.

Wayne

- Have not started yet still getting training.
- Plan to start taking family assessments in the next few weeks.
- Have been doing CFT s because they were an FFK county and they use those meetings as a part of any decision.
- The staff and management is meeting weekly to review and discuss the MRS manual.
- Will just pick case on a case by case basis which cases to do as family assessments at first.
- Plan to keep two workers as dedicated forensic investigators
- So far the schools have been good about coming to meetings but law enforcement may be harder because they are so short staffed right now.

Cumberland

- Went to training this month and have made a brochure, currently working on other tools.
- Started family assessments Monday, currently are not taking DV as family assessment, hope to eventually but want to get more expertise with family assessments first.
- Will be meeting every two weeks for agency updates.
- Started family assessments in particular geographic areas of the county. Hope to expand in April after their Review.

Onslow

- Rolling out Tuesday and all neglect case will be taken as family assessment.
- Have made a brochure.

Brunswick

- Have seen an increase in custody cases, partly due to the increase in substance abuse in their county. By doing Family Assessments the SW become more involved with the family and often discover SA that they might not have found before.
- Really like CFTs but they need facilitators.
- They take DV as forensic and also cases that meet the definition of neglect but that make the hairs on your neck stand up .
- One of the original 10 they have changed a lot since they started.
- Has red dot system. If in the past the family has threatened someone at the agency they put a red dot on the file so that the in the future people will know.
- Also take DV with weapons as forensic.
- Often use CFT during assessments if they think they will be useful.

Lenoir

- Supervisors and workers talked about who would like to be a family assessor and who would like to be forensic. This provided a sense of relief as people didn't have to fear they would just be assigned to a track they didn't want to work.
- Started January 1 and jumped in 100% - workers say that this is what I thought social work was supposed to be .
- They take DV and chronic neglect as forensic. Holly suggested that they might want to try taking some of the chronic neglect as family assessment because the old way obviously hasn't worked for the family. If the situation permits, try something new.

Other issues/topics

Domestic Violence

- Remember that you can do these family assessment, but you should meet with the non-offending parent in private and ask how they would like you to handle it interview together or separately. This person is the one that has to live in the situation.

Benefits of CFTs

- Note that they are required for all high risk case management, no matter if it was a substantiation or in need of services.
- Nash talked about a success that they had with a CFT. Had a mother who could not care for her children and the Grandmother was going to keep them but that placement was also at risk because of medical issues. A CFT allowed them to bring in other family members and so the children were able to stay in Grandma s home. Grandmother lives in Durham so this was a multicounty CFT.
- They have also contracted Krispy Kreme who has agreed to donate doughnuts for CFTs.

Cases involving child on child sexual contact and non verbal children with suspicious bruises where there is no identified perpetrator.

- Tony reported that local Child Advocacy Institutes will want you to take these cases as forensic. This was a topic of discussion at all 3 meetings several months ago and the overwhelming majority of counties wanted the decision left up to the DSS on a case by case basis.
- Need to be prepared to respond to this.

Remember that being family friendly does not mean that you have to (or should) be the family s friend and let them make all the decisions!